Encyclopaedia Aristasiana

Find in Entire Site Go

Backlinks...

Menu

Home
Search
List pages
Last Changes

Image Galleries

Main Sections

Aristasian Glossary
Aristasian Life and Culture
Aristasia Pura
Aristasia in Telluria
Philosophy and Religion
Sound and Kinematics
Telluria Criticism

Random Pages

Being in Thame
The Cockney Raj
Estuary English
Aristasian Education
Reverence
Raihiralan
Aristasia in Telluria
Femininity
Race
"Sex", "Relationships", Amity and Marriage

Search

in:
Entire Site Go

Login

Login as...
User:
Password:
Login

Standard | Secure

Aristasian Politics

Politics in Aristasia is entirely different from politics in Telluria. The party system does not exist, and the entire connotation of the word "politics" as implying "conflict" or "social change" is unknown. "Politics" (or, more usually, "polity") means, in Aristasia, simply the art and science of managing State affairs.

The rulers of the Aristasian nations are their respective Queens who are advised by non-elected advisers, somewhat the equivalent of senior civil servants - that is, professional managers of State who help the Queen to do what she wants to do.

The job of the Queen, as titular and political Head of State, is essentially to facilitate the Dance of the Cosmos as it is reflected in the microcosm of her nation - not to change the steps, either according to her own ideas or to the latest fashions. Obviously certain changes must sometimes be made in adaptation to changing conditions, but these are rarely controversial and always tactful. It is the essence of the State to be literally stately. That is what Princesses are trained for from the earliest age.

There are parliaments in most nations, but these are of much less importance than in Telluria. They debate certain subjects and make formal recommendations to the Queen which are usually acted upon, though this is entirely at the Royal discretion. Again these recommendations are rarely controversial.

The saying that "A law is never passed until it has become so customary that everyone thought it was a law already" is not entirely true, but it certainly gives the idea of the non-revolutionary nature of Aristasian politics. If three major laws (as opposed to minor housekeeping matters) were passed in one year it would be a very unusual and significant year, and probably one in which some kind of crisis was being dealt with.

Neither the Queen, nor any official or parliamentarian is termed a "lawmaker". The *lawgivers* (a significantly different term, implying the handing down of Law from a a Divine Source) of the Nations and the Empire did their work close to

the time of the sacred origins of each polity. The function of current menamatrini is as custodians of the Law of Heaven, or Thamë.

Most parliaments do not have general elections, but a representative is elected when required - when one resigns or dies. In many cases, though, a representative will serve for a certain limited period such as five years, but it is not usual that all places should be elected at once. The limitation is more because the duty of service is seen as one that should have some term than to limit the power of a member or faction. However, some keen parliamentarians stand for re-election again and again. The job is not too arduous as most parliaments convene only a few times a year.

Election processes vary from district to district, some representatives being elected by a small number of hereditary electors, some by concillation with a greater or smaller group of the population. In some cases a parliamentary seat is under the stewardship of a particular family and the member is elected (that is to say, chosen) by the elders of the family.

In a minority of districts there is universal adult suffrage or universal brunette suffrage - or occasionally universal blonde suffrage. But it should be remembered that these concillations are not political in the sense of being party-oriented. They are simply an exercise in choosing a good individual for the position. Members are chosen not usually for their "policies" but for their wisdom, experience, family background and so on. An argument against universal suffrage is that candidates are too likely to receive votes for superficial reasons such as charm, personal attractiveness or stylish dressing rather than more important qualifications.

However, it should be understood that the decision of a popular vote is never final. The term for such a vote is not an "election" but a "concillation". In other words, a group of the population is called upon to give their *council* in the matter of choosing the office-holder. Concillation, where it exists, is regarded as one part, but not the whole, of the election process. The final choice, or election, will always rest with the relevant Elders, although in many cases it is traditional for the result of the concillation to be adhered to and an election that negated it would be rare.

Terminology

Recent (that is to say 20th Century) Tellurian English has made certain subtle but highly significant changes in political terminology. Traditional terminology assumes that the State (as the very term implies) is *static* (that is to say, stable), while recent terminology implies that it is dynamic and progressive (that is to say unstable and in a constant state of flux or change).

Needless to say, Aristasian usage in Telluria employs the

older, stability-based terms. For example:

States and other administrative units have *rulers*, not *leaders*. Their function is not to "go somewhere", bringing the people along behind them, but to administer a stable Order of Thamë.

Candidates *stand* for election, they do not *run* for election. They are presenting themselves as servants of Queen and country, not engaging in a race.

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